

Cornell Begins Investigation Of CIA Funds

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Cornell University has begun an investigation to determine the extent of involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency here.

President James A. Perkins announced the probe prior to a disclosure Wednesday by NBC Television that the State Industrial and Labor Relations School at Cornell had received about \$214,000 from the CIA, funneled through the Marshall Foundation of Houston, Tex., between 1961 and 1964.

"We are reviewing all of our extensive records of foundation grants to determine to what extent we may have received such funds" Perkins said.

In Washington, a spokesman for the CIA refused to comment on the report.

Vernon H. Jensen, associate dean of the I&LR school, said the school is no longer receiving funds from the foundation. He said school officials were not aware of CIA funding. The nine-month program was designed to provide special training for union officials.

"No one here knew anything about it," Jensen said.

John W. McConnell was dean of the I&LR school during the period of CIA funding. He has since left Ithaca and is currently president of the University of New Hampshire.

McConnell said he did not think CIA support "...made any difference in the program," and that no influence was ever exerted by the Marshall Foundation. McConnell termed it "...an excellent program and very much needed."

Perkins called the general use of CIA funds "an unwise intervention into the academic world which now puts our stated objectivity into question. We shall all suffer from this," he said.

Perkins said Cornell "... never knowingly received any financial assistance from the CIA. Given that we routinely receive funds from many dozens of private foundations, I cannot say that we have not unsuspectingly received funds from some foundation which had in turn received funds from the CIA."

The Cornell president added: "... whatever are the particular facts in our case, many university programs will now be suspect in the eyes of many of our friends, particularly those overseas. To overcome this, we shall need to be even more careful in the selection of our sources of our support. But far more importantly, we must continue to approach our programs with the highest standards of openness, objectivity, and academic relevance. It is adherence to these which in the long run will justify our requests for both research support and research collaboration."

The executive board of the Cornell student government issued a statement Wednesday calling CIA involvement "repugnant."

Union officials in the program came to Cornell on the recommendations of their union and were screened by a selection committee at the I&LR school.

Jensen said they enrolled in regular Cornell courses, mostly in the labor relations school but also in languages in the arts college and other courses.

Following their schooling, the union men spent a year as interns overseas in positions "their unions helped them develop," Jensen said.